

- 1) **Why does the issue matter?**
- 2) **What do the data reveal to clarify the issue and its importance?**

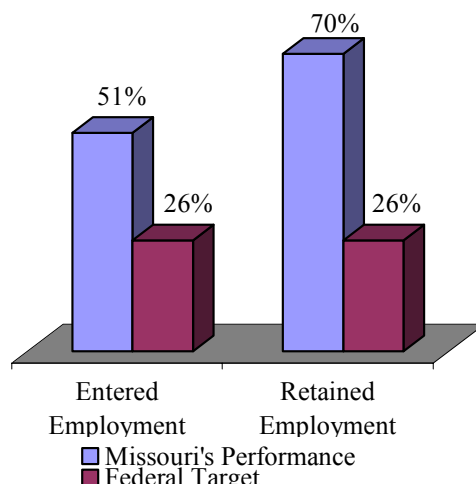
Missouri's Year 2000 Census data indicate that over 960,000, or approximately 17.2%, of Missouri adults, have not completed high school and are not in school. To be removed from welfare, to become eligible for employment or job training, or to increase their earnings, these adults need a high school education or GED. Many adults in Missouri who have completed high school still need basic skills training to succeed in the workplace.

Local education agencies are funded to provide Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) services to persons, 16 years of age or older, who are out of school and who have less than a high school education. It is unlikely that many of the adults served through the AEL programs will have full-time jobs and be self-supporting, and/or be involved in their children's education. Often, an intergenerational cycle of under-education and poverty exists.

3. What are the indicators of success or progress for the issue under consideration?

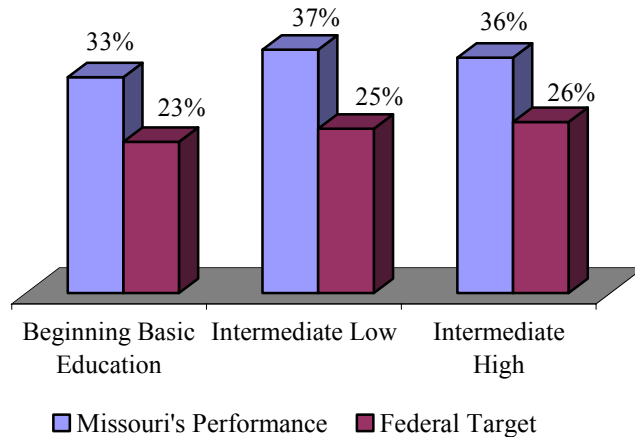
For the second consecutive year, Missouri has met the federal performance requirements in Adult Education and Literacy. All of the performance results are based only on participants who stay in the program 12 or more hours. The core outcome measures related to employment were met by a significant margin in Fiscal Year 2002. The chart below, representing FY 02 performance, indicates that fifty-one percent (51%) of the total number of learners entered employment, which is based on the number of learners in the workforce who were unemployed at entry and had a main or secondary goal of obtaining employment. Seventy percent (70%) of the total number of learners retained employment, which is based on the number of learners in the workforce who were employed at entry and who indicated a related goal of employment.

FISCAL YEAR 2002 PERFORMANCE - EMPLOYMENT



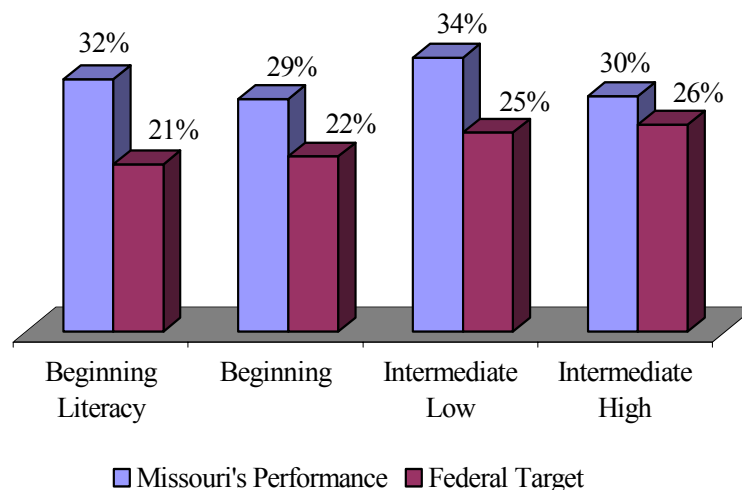
Missouri AEL programs also met the federal performance targets with respect to educational gain. Educational gain in AEL is structured around literacy levels, with each level comprised of 2-3 grade levels. The percentage of level completion is based on the total number of learners who pretest at one level and posttest at a higher level. The chart below shows that Missouri exceeded performance targets by 10% or more.

FISCAL YEAR 2002 PERFORMANCE – Adult Basic Education



Based on the growing number of refugee and immigrants coming to Missouri, the number of eligible adults needing English as a Second Language (*ESL*) support services has increased. AEL programs have expanded services and offerings to assist individuals to read and speak the English language in Missouri. Missouri improved dramatically in Fiscal Year 2002 with higher performance in ESL literacy level completion. As the chart shows below, Missouri exceeded the federal targets in each of the low and intermediate ESL levels.

FISCAL YEAR 2002 PERFORMANCE – English as a Second Language



4. In what ways do the Midwest states have advantages and gaps or challenges regarding the issue under consideration?

Missouri has a distinct advantage in improving performance through the implementation of performance-based funding. During the initial years of implementation, Missouri has seen increases in participation, testing and performance. The primary objectives for implementing the new AEL funding formula include:

- Sustaining instructional effectiveness
- Improving student performance and progress
- Assisting customers and partners in reaching their individual goals
- Providing incentives to promote professional development
- Enhancing financial support of instructional planning and preparation
- Fulfilling federal accountability requirements

Over the last three years, Missouri also has piloted projects related to increasing access and services to targeted populations. An online classroom was developed for Missouri citizens to provide alternate instruction in preparing to take the GED Test. “Virtual classrooms” are a part of the continuum of services to offer instruction to learners who have barriers to enrolling in traditional classroom programs. These learners are able to interact with online materials from their homes, libraries, local partners or other Internet access points.

Missouri also combined two programs, ESL and Family Literacy, into one approach in serving a growing population. This approach is growing into a preferred style of delivery. Preliminary indications for those adults served through the ESL Family Literacy program show that 66% stayed 12 hours, and 63% have progressed one or more literacy levels. All programs report that parents served in the ESL Family Literacy program have improved relationships with their child’s teacher and school. Parents have increased participation in their student’s education activities such as parent/teacher conferences, literacy activities, and obtaining library cards. The involvement with PAT and Head Start has shown positive results, with increases in student readiness for Kindergarten. K-12 ESL students are showing success on the MAP test and within the classroom.

5. What strategies can be employed to optimize strengths and build on areas needing development?

Missouri has established a new performance-based funding system that emphasizes educational gain and goal achievement. AEL funding is based on three components; core funding, performance funding and targeted allocations.

The core funding formula provides a majority of Missouri’s AEL funding through a formula driven by instructional time. The funds are distributed to grantees on an audited contact-hour basis, and are intended to support “core” instructional and operational activities. To maintain a fair and equitable funding formula, the “core” funding amount

must be sufficient to support basic program operations. Therefore, the core funding calculations will be based on the previous four years' totals of audited contact hours.

The performance funding formula is based on the number of individuals who attained success through AEL programs and services. The best measures of AEL student progress are related to established performance measures. The recognized measures are GED Attainment and literacy level completion. The performance funding is calculated from the total number of individuals multiplied by the attainment rate for each performance measure.

Special targeted allocations may be made available during each fiscal year. These allocations may include, but are not limited to, data collection, marketing, one-stop support, technology, and supplemental literacy. Each targeted allocation may require the submission and approval of a plan prior to funds being expended.

The GED Online program has had good success in the years it has been in operation, with a current enrollment of 1,725. Missouri has taken a different approach to distance learning and has provided software and services which allow the online instructor to match instruction with the student's needs. Instead of purchasing one software package and placing all students in that platform, the Missouri GED Online has used the software from SkillsTutor.com, and BLS Tutorsystems for students who need to brush up on their skills. Teachers working with the GED Online Classroom have also placed materials and resources into the Blackboard platform for those students who will soon be ready to take the GED test. These students are working with teacher-made resources and other instructional materials, which are tailored for the GED test. In Fiscal Year 2003, seventy (70) students passed the GED.

6. What are the specific recommendations that flow from these strategies?

AEL programs in Missouri have seen a lot of positive consequences from the change in the funding formula. Teachers have increased efforts in testing to better monitor student progress. Administrators have focused on improving the quality of data collected to make incremental steps of continuous improvement. In this present environment where federal and state funding have been reduced, the need for accurate information is necessary to make tough decisions.

Missouri has piloted distance-learning products for three years, and has implemented the GED Online classroom. Missouri is also participating in the Project IDEAL (Improving Distance Education for Adult Learners) consortium. This consortium is working to provide authentic research into distance learning for the adult learner with basic or secondary learning levels, and to help compile best practices from the 14 participating states.

Missouri AEL has supported distance-learning instruction by providing online access to learning materials through SkillsTutor, BLS Tutorsystems, and the GED Online Classroom. This year Missouri AEL has partnered with the state libraries and PBS

stations to add the Workplace Essential Skills (WES) and GED Connections (GEDC) materials to the resources available to online learners.

To improve access to distance learning opportunities for all students in Missouri, a new application process has been implemented that will increase the number of instructors across the state, and will allow good, consistent training in using the products available for online learning. The need for well-trained instructors to help those students who are not able to attend traditional classes is growing. To help facilitate the training of new instructors and to fund local programs for providing these instructors in the online environment, Missouri has appointed an AEL Distance Learning Coordinator.